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Visit of U.N. Chief Linked to Release Of Polish Woman

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WARSAW, Feb. 20—A former United Nations employe jailed by Polish authorities 4½ years ago on charges of spying for the West was freed today in connection with the current visit of U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Repeated efforts by senior U.N. officials had failed until now to gain the release of Alicja Wesolowska, a Polish national who had worked as a U.N. secretary, but Perez de Cuellar's visit is being viewed by Polish authorities as an opportunity to reestablish smooth relations with the United Nations after months of strain over human rights disputes and to make some display of leniency.

"For the moment everybody is just happy I am out," Wesolowska, who turns 40 in nine days, told reporters by phone from an undisclosed location following her release from jail this morning. "I'm happy to be with my parents at last. I think they have suffered more than I have."

Remembered as a gregarious personality by several of her friends, Wesolowska was arrested in August 1979 while vacationing in Poland after spending nine years working in New York City. She was convicted seven months later by a military tribunal, reportedly on charges of attempting to recruit East Europeans to work for the Central Intelligence Agency, and was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Wesolowska said today she was told that her release was an official act of clemency.

But the government has yet to announce she was freed, and this evening, before reporters learned of the action, Perez de Cuellar himself only hinted at it during a press conference, saying he had received some "very encouraging" news about the Wesolowska case in talks with Polish leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski.

The U.N. secretary general also indicated that Polish officials may be preparing to free the 11 leading opposition figures now entering their third year in prison under investigative detention and awaiting trial on charges of plotting the violent overthrow of the state.

The government has appeared reluctant to go ahead with the trial for fear of making martyrs of the dissidents, bringing new embarrassments on the Communist leadership in Warsaw, and causing fresh strains in Poland's relations with the West. The 11 include seven senior officials of the now-outlawed Solidarity trade union and four leaders of KOR, the Committee for Social Self-Defense, a group of dissident intellectuals that predated Solidarity.

Asked whether he had discussed the Solidarity, KOR and Wesolowska cases with Jaruzelski during their breakfast meeting today, Perez de Cuellar said these problem issues had been raised in the talks by the Polish side. "What I heard was very encouraging," he said.

Perez de Cuellar's trip marks only the second visit to Poland by a ranking international political figure—the first was by Pope John Paul II last June—since the crushing of Solidarity and the imposition of martial law in December 1981.

The U.N. leader, a Peruvian career diplomat who served as ambassador to Moscow from 1969 to 1971 and was also accredited to Warsaw at the time, has been praised in the Polish media as someone who showed understanding for Polish affairs during the martial law period.

Perez de Cuellar's visit is part of a tour of Eastern Europe that will take him to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria. In his public remarks, he has skirted specific reference to recent frictions between Poland and the world body.

In a speech yesterday in Krakow, Perez de Cuellar spoke generally of human rights violations "taking place all over the world," adding that "important human rights—civil, political, economic, social, religious and trade union—continue too frequently to be ignored."

Asked today whether he had had Poland in mind with those remarks, Perez de Cuellar termed the question "irrelevant" and added, "It is not easy" to find a country that does not commit one kind of human rights violation or another.